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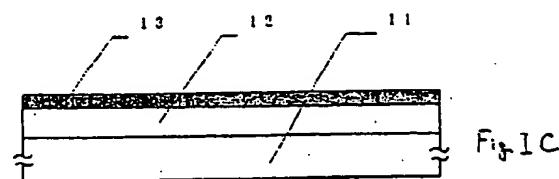
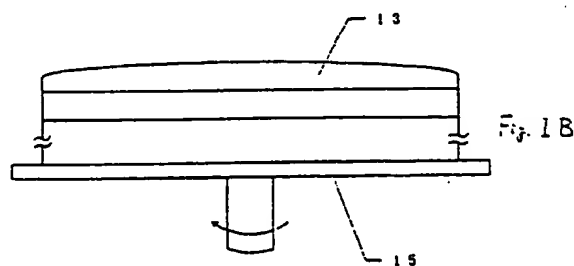
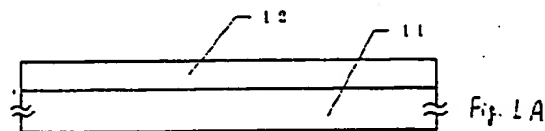
Applicant : SEMICONDUCTOR ENERGY
LABORATORY CO., LTD.
398 Hase
Atsugi-shi Kanagawa-ken, 243 (JP)

Inventor : Ohtani, Hisashi
 Mac Aikoishida Court 501,
 7-896-1, Takamori
 Isehara-shi, Kanagawa-ken 259-11 (JP)
 Inventor : Miyanaga, Akiharu
 2-505, 3-4-1, Minamigaoka
 Hadano-shi, Kanagawa-ken 257 (JP)
 Inventor : Takeyama, Junichi
 Fiat SEL-A 102,
 304-1, Hase
 Atsugi-shi, Kanagawa-ken 243 (JP)

Representative : Milhench, Howard Leslie et al
 R.G.C. Jenkins & Co.
 26 Caxton Street
 London SW1H 0RJ (GB)

Method of manufacturing a crystallized semiconductor layer and semiconductor devices using it.

A method for manufacturing a semiconductor device having a crystalline silicon semiconductor layer comprises the steps of heat crystallizing an amorphous silicon semiconductor layer (12) at a relatively low temperature because of the use of a crystallization promoting material such as Ni, Pd, Cu, Ag, Au, In, Sn, Pb, P, As, and Sb. The crystallization promoting material is introduced by mixing it within a liquid precursor material for forming silicon oxide (13) and coating the precursor material onto the amorphous silicon film (12).



EP 0 656 644 A1

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the manufacture of semiconductor devices and particularly, though not exclusively relates to the manufacture of thin film transistors (TFT) as are used in integrated circuits, for example as switching elements in an active matrix circuit in an electro-optical device or as a driving circuit thereof formed on the same substrate as the active matrix circuit.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

An amorphous silicon film can be utilized most readily as the thin film semiconductor for a TFT. However, the electric characteristics of amorphous silicon film are poorer than those of crystalline thin film semiconductors such as, for example, polycrystalline silicon, single crystalline silicon and microcrystalline silicon.

A crystalline silicon film can be prepared by first forming an amorphous silicon film, and then heat treating the resulting film to effect crystallization of the same, but the heat treatment of the amorphous silicon film requires the film to be heated at a temperature of 600°C or higher for a duration of 10 hours or longer and this is detrimental for glass substrates. For instance, Corning 7059 glass which is commonly used for the substrates of active matrix liquid crystal display devices has a glass distortion point of 593°C, and is therefore not suitable for large area substrates that have to be subjected to heating at a temperature of 600°C or higher.

The inventors of the present invention have found that the crystallization of an amorphous silicon film can be effected by heating the film at 550°C for a duration of about 4 hours if a trace amount of nickel or palladium, or other elements such as lead, is introduced into the surface of the amorphous silicon film. Such elements (hereinafter referred to as "catalyst elements capable of promoting the crystallization of an amorphous silicon film" or simply as "catalyst elements") can be introduced to the surface of the amorphous silicon film by plasma treatment or by ion implantation for example. Plasma treatment is effected in a plasma CVD apparatus in which the catalyst elements are added into the amorphous silicon film by generating a plasma in an atmosphere such as of gaseous hydrogen or nitrogen using an electrode containing the catalyst elements.

However, the presence of such catalyst elements in large quantity in semiconductor materials is not preferred, because the use of such semiconductor materials in semiconductor devices greatly impairs the reliability and the electric stability of the devices. This gives rise to the conflicting requirements that whilst the catalyst elements are necessary for the crystallization of the amorphous silicon film, they are

preferably not much incorporated into the crystallized silicon. In order to satisfy these requirements, it is necessary to select as the catalyst element an element which tends to be inactive in crystalline silicon and to minimize the amount of the element that is added to the silicon film. To achieve this, the quantity of the catalyst element to be incorporated in the film must be controlled with high precision.

The crystallization process was studied in detail by the inventors of the present invention for the case in which nickel was used as the catalyst element, and the following findings were obtained as a result:

(1) In the case where nickel was incorporated by plasma treatment into an amorphous silicon film, the nickel was found to intrude into the film to a considerable depth before the film was subjected to heat treatment;

(2) The initial nucleation occurred from the surface at which the nickel was added;

(3) When a nickel layer was formed on an amorphous silicon film by vapor deposition, the crystallization of the amorphous silicon film occurred in the same manner as in the case where the nickel was introduced by effecting plasma treatment; and

(4) When a relatively large amount of nickel was incorporated into an amorphous silicon film and a laser was irradiated onto the amorphous silicon film for effecting crystallization of the same or the film was otherwise subjected to heat crystallization, the nickel tended to segregate at the surface of the film with the result that the film could not be used as an active semiconductor layer.

In view of the foregoing, the inventors concluded that not all of the nickel introduced by plasma treatment functions to promote crystallization of the amorphous silicon. That is, if a large amount of nickel is introduced, there exists an excess amount of the nickel which does not function for promoting crystallization. The inventors considered that it is the point or the face at which the nickel contacts the amorphous silicon that functions to promote the crystallization of the silicon at lower temperatures, and that the nickel therefore has to be minutely dispersed in the amorphous silicon in the form of atoms and moreover needs to be dispersed in the vicinity of a surface of the amorphous silicon film. Furthermore, the concentration of the nickel should be as small as possible but within a range which is sufficiently high to promote the lower temperature crystallization of the amorphous silicon.

A trace amount of nickel or other catalyst element capable of accelerating the crystallization of amorphous silicon can be incorporated in the vicinity of a surface of an amorphous silicon film by, for example, vapor deposition. However, vapor deposition is disadvantageous as regards its controllability and is therefore not suitable for precisely controlling the amount of the catalyst element that is incorporated in the

amorphous silicon film.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In the light of the aforementioned circumstances, a primary object of the present invention is to obtain a crystalline silicon film using a catalyst element for promoting crystallization thereof at a lower temperature than the temperature which would be needed if the catalyst element was not used and desirably at a process temperature no greater than 600°C or less. It is a further object of the present invention to control (and minimize) the concentration of the catalyst element in the crystalline silicon film and to improve productivity.

In order to achieve the foregoing objects of the invention and in accordance with the most generic concept of the invention, it is the primary feature of the present invention to dispose a film which contains a catalyst element or compound thereof in contact with a silicon film, and to crystallize the silicon with the aid of the catalyst element by diffusing the catalyst into the silicon film. More particularly, rather than introducing the catalyst element directly to the amorphous silicon film by a process such as CVD, plasma treatment or ion implantation as has previously been proposed which causes the catalyst element to penetrate the silicon in an uncontrolled manner giving rise to the disadvantages aforementioned, the underlying concept of the present invention is to provide a layer or film incorporating (but not formed from) the catalyst element or a compound thereof in contact with the surface of the silicon film by a process which does not in itself cause the catalyst element to be introduced into the silicon or at least does not cause the catalyst element to be introduced to a significant or substantial extent and, as a separate matter, to cause the catalyst element to diffuse from such surface layer into the silicon. In other words, the layer or film incorporating the catalyst element is initially juxtaposed with the silicon film without diffusion of the catalyst element into the silicon and then process conditions are established to diffuse the catalyst element into the silicon.

As will be explained in detail hereinafter, by incorporating the catalyst element into a layer which is juxtaposed with the amorphous silicon film, the concentration of catalyst in the layer can readily be determined, and likewise the process conditions for effecting diffusion of the catalyst into the silicon, particularly temperature and diffusion time, are readily controllable. As a result, the final concentration of the catalyst element in the crystalline silicon can readily be controlled and the aforementioned difficulties can be avoided with advantageous results.

The film or layer which incorporates the catalyst is most conveniently a silicon oxide film, since silicon oxide is the most readily available dielectric for a sil-

icon semiconductor device. The catalyst material can be added to a solution which contains silicon oxide, following which the solution may be coated on a surface by spin coating or otherwise to form a silicon oxide film incorporating a small amount of the catalyst element. Other materials could however form the basis of the catalyst containing film providing they can withstand the processing temperatures involved in the practice of the invention. Thus, for example, the film could be based upon alumina which may be dissolved in an organic solvent, or could be based upon an organic film such as of a photoresist material.

The silicon oxide or other film which contains the catalyst, either in atomic form or in compound form, is disposed in contact with the silicon film, especially but not exclusively an amorphous silicon film, that is to be crystallized and the silicon film with the catalyst containing film in contact therewith may then be crystallized by heat annealing. During the heat annealing, the catalyst element diffuses from the silicon oxide or other catalyst containing film into the amorphous silicon film to promote the crystallization thereof.

In a most preferred embodiment of the present invention, a silicon oxide film containing the catalyst element is formed using a solution which on its own can be used to form a silicon oxide film. The catalyst element or a compound thereof is introduced into such a solution at a predetermined concentration. The use of a silicon oxide film is advantageous because it is easily formed by coating the silicon surface with a solution as aforementioned and can endure high temperatures during heat crystallization. An example of a solution for preparing a silicon oxide film to hold a catalyst element is an OCD (Ohka Diffusion Source) solution which is manufactured by Tokyo Ohka Co. Ltd. The OCD solution comprises a silanol series monomer or oligomer dissolved in an organic solvent such as alcohol or ketone. The OCD also contains proper additives such as an organic binder. It is also possible to use other solutions in which fine particles of silicon oxide are dissolved or dispersed in an organic solvent. For example, NT-L6008, NHC AT-732, NHC AT-741R, and NHC CT-3301, trade names of solutions marketed by Nissan Kagaku Kogyo Kabushikigaisha, may be used as a starting material for the silicon oxide film.

For example, when using the OCD solution and nickel as a catalyst element, the following methods may be applied.

- (1) Directly adding a nickel compound into the OCD solution, or
- (2) Dissolving a nickel compound in a solvent and adding the solvent into the OCD solution.

In the case of the above method (1), the nickel compound has to be soluble in the solvent of the OCD. For example, nickel acetyl acetonate or 2-ethyl hexanoic acid nickel are usable.

In the case of using the above method (2), a sol-

vent such as water, alcohol, ester, or ketone can be used for dissolving a nickel compound. However, it is preferable to use a solvent which is a component of the OCD solution.

Examples of a nickel compound which is usable with an alcohol as a solvent are nickel bromide, nickel acetate, nickel oxalate, nickel chloride, nickel iodide, nickel nitrate, nickel sulfate, nickel formate, nickel acetyl acetonate, and 4-cyclohexyl nickel butyric acid.

Also, it is useful to add an interfacial activation agent into a solution containing the catalyst. Further, it is useful to apply an adhesion improving agent such as HNDS (hexamethyl silaxane), for example, OAP produced by Tokyo Ohka Kogyo onto a surface to be coated with the solution containing a catalyst element in order to increase adhesion therebetween.

In the above examples, a nickel compound is completely dissolved in a solution. However, it is possible to use an emulsion in which elemental nickel or a nickel compound is homogeneously dispersed, and to add such an emulsion into the OCD.

Other catalyst elements other than nickel may be used in the same manner as explained above.

The amount of catalyst to be added into a solution should be about 20-5000 ppm, preferably, 200-2000 ppm with respect to an OCD solution which contains silicon oxide at a concentration of 2.0wt%, although it depends upon the kind of solution used.

Also, it is possible to selectively perform crystallization of an amorphous silicon film by applying the film or layer containing the catalyst element onto only a selected portion of the silicon film. Crystallization then proceeds from the region onto which the silicon oxide or other catalyst containing film is formed towards regions onto which the silicon oxide film is not applied. In such a case, crystals grow approximately in parallel with a surface of the silicon film, and the inventors of this invention call such a region a lateral growth region hereinbelow.

The lateral growth region of the crystalline film tends to contain the catalyst element at a lower concentration as compared with the region onto which the catalyst containing solution is directly provided. Therefore, the lateral growth region is particularly advantageous for use as an active region of a semiconductor device since the concentration of impurities in an active region should generally be lowered. Accordingly, it is advantageous to manufacture a semiconductor device using the lateral growth region as an active region thereof.

In the description of the present invention that is given her in, nickel is disclosed as the most preferred catalyst element. However, it is to be understood that other catalyst elements may be used in a similar manner. Examples of such elements Pd, Pt, Cu, Ag, Au, In, Sn, Pb, P, As and Sb. It is also possible to select one or more elements selected from the groups VIII,

IIIb, IVb and Vb of the Japanese periodic table of the elements.

In the case of using Fe, it is possible to use a iron salt, for example, $\text{FeBr}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{FeBr}_3 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Fe}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_3 \cdot x\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{FeCl}_2 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{FeCl}_3 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{FeF}_3 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Fe}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Fe}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$, and $\text{FePO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

In the case of using Co, it is possible to use a cobalt salt, for example, $\text{CoBr}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Co}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{CoCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{CoF}_2 \cdot x\text{H}_2\text{O}$, and $\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

In the case of using Ru, it is possible to use a ruthenium salt, for example, $\text{RuCl}_3 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$.

In the case of using Rh, it is possible to use a rhodium salt, for example, $\text{RhCl}_3 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

In the case of using Pd, it is possible to use a palladium salt, for example, $\text{PdCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

In the case of using Os, it is possible to use an osmium salt, for example, OsCl_3 .

In the case of using Ir, it is possible to use an iridium salt, for example, $\text{IrCl}_3 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and IrCl_4 .

In the case of using Pt, it is possible to use platinum salt, for example, $\text{PtCl}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

In the case of using Cu, it is possible to use a copper compound such as $\text{Cu}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2$, $\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, and $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

In the case of using Au, it is possible to use a gold compound such as $\text{AuCl}_3 \cdot x\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{AuHC1}_4 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{AuNaCl}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$.

The catalyst element contained in the silicon oxide or other film formed on an amorphous silicon film may be diffused into the amorphous silicon film by thermal treatment, resulting in promoting crystallization of the silicon film. It should be noted that the diffusion coefficient of a catalyst element in a silicon oxide film is very small as compared with that in an amorphous silicon film. For this reason, the catalyst element which actually functions to promote the crystallization is only that portion of the catalyst element which exists in the immediate vicinity where the silicon oxide film and the amorphous silicon film juxtaposed. In other words, only catalyst material which is located in the interface region where the silicon oxide film contacts the silicon film diffuses into the silicon film. For this reason, the use of a catalyst containing silicon oxide film is particularly advantageous because the amount of catalyst that is diffused into the silicon film can be made uniform even if the thickness of the silicon oxide film is not uniform.

Also, it is possible to control the amount of catalyst material which diffuses into an amorphous silicon film during thermal treatment of the same by controlling the heating time or the temperature.

The method of the present invention as described in the foregoing has the following advantages:

- (a) The concentration of catalyst in a solution can be accurately controlled;
- (b) The amount of catalyst element to be incorporated into a silicon film can be determined by the

concentration of the catalyst element in the solution if the solution is provided in contact with a surface of the silicon film; and

(c) A catalyst element which is adsorbed by the surface of an amorphous silicon film mainly function as a catalyst for promoting the crystallization so that the amount of the catalyst in the silicon can be minimized.

Having described the present invention in the foregoing by reference to specific details of exemplary embodiments, it will be appreciated that in one of its more generic aspects the present invention provides a method for enhancing the crystallinity of a silicon layer comprising: disposing in contact with a semiconductor layer comprising silicon a film which contains a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor layer; diffusing said metal or metal compound into said semiconductor film by heating; and annealing said semiconductor layer in order to enhance the crystallinity of said semiconductor layer.

According to another aspect, the present invention provides a method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of: forming a semiconductor layer comprising silicon on a substrate; coating said semiconductor layer with a liquid precursor material for forming silicon oxide, said liquid precursor material incorporating a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor layer; prebaking said substrate in order to form a film comprising silicon oxide from said liquid precursor; and annealing said semiconductor layer in order to crystallize said semiconductor layer, said metal or metal compound diffusing through said semiconductor film during crystallization.

Yet another aspect of the invention provides a method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of: preparing a liquid precursor material for forming silicon oxide, wherein said precursor material incorporates a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of silicon; forming a semiconductor film comprising silicon on a substrate; coating said precursor material onto said semiconductor film; prebaking said substrate to form a silicon oxide film containing said metal or metal compound on said semiconductor film; patterning said silicon oxide film so that only a selected region of said semiconductor layer is provided with said silicon oxide film; and heating said semiconductor layer in order to crystallize the same, said metal or metal compound diffusing into said semiconductor layer during said heating.

A fourth aspect of the present invention provides a method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of: forming a semiconductor layer comprising silicon on a substrate, said semiconductor layer having at least a first region and a second region adjacent to each other; forming a film contain-

ing a catalyst for promoting crystallization of said semiconductor film on only the first region of said semiconductor layer; diffusing said catalyst into the first region of said semiconductor layer; and heating said semiconductor layer so that said catalyst diffuses from the first region of said semiconductor layer into the second region of said semiconductor layer adjacent thereto, thereby crystallizing said second region of the semiconductor layer.

A fifth aspect of the present invention provides a method for enhancing the crystallinity of a silicon layer comprising: disposing in contact with a semiconductor layer comprising silicon a film which contains a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor layer; and annealing said semiconductor layer in order to crystallize said semiconductor layer, said metal or metal compound diffusing into said semiconductor film during crystallization.

A sixth aspect of the present invention provides a method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of: forming a semiconductor film comprising silicon on a substrate, said semiconductor film having at least a first region and a second region adjacent thereto; forming a mask comprising silicon oxide on said second region of the semiconductor film while said first region is exposed; selectively introducing a catalyst into the first region of said semiconductor layer; and heat crystallizing said semiconductor layer, wherein said catalyst migrates through said semiconductor layer from said first region to said second region during said heat crystallizing so that said second region is crystallized.

A seventh aspect of the present invention provides a method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of: forming a semiconductor film comprising silicon on a substrate; oxidizing a surface of said semiconductor film to form a silicon oxide film on said semiconductor film; applying a solution containing a metal or metal compound onto said silicon oxide film, said metal or metal compound being capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor film; diffusing said metal or metal compound into said semiconductor film through said silicon oxide film, said silicon oxide film being sufficiently thin to allow said metal or metal compound to penetrate therethrough; and crystallizing said semiconductor film by heating.

The invention, in yet another of its aspects, provides a method of enhancing the crystallinity of a silicon film, particularly though not exclusively an amorphous silicon film, said method comprising juxtaposing with a surface of said silicon film a layer comprising a crystallization catalyst incorporated in a carrier material, and establishing process conditions such as to cause the catalyst to diffuse into the juxtaposed silicon film.

The invention also provides a semiconductor de-

vice formed on a substrate and having at least one semiconductor layer as an active region thereof, wherein said semiconductor layer comprises crystalline silicon and contains metal, and wherein said semiconductor layer has a {111} plane.

Our European Patent Application No. 94307986.3 filed 31 October 1994 describes and claims a similar but different technique for obtaining crystallization of silicon films, particularly amorphous silicon films. In the prior application, a catalyst compound is dissolved in a solvent and the obtained solution is applied to an amorphous silicon film. By heating the substrate, the solvent is vaporized and the catalyst compound remains on the surface. For example, a nickel acetate aqueous solution is coated on a surface and then dried so that a layer of nickel acetate remains. The present invention is an improvement of that method. In accordance with the present inventions, a nickel compound or other catalyst element or compound is introduced into a silicon oxide formation liquid or another film formation substance. Therefore, the film formed on the amorphous silicon film is not a catalyst or catalyst compound layer itself. Rather, the film mainly comprises silicon oxide or another carrier material which contains the catalyst therein. The advantage of using a carrier film incorporating the catalyst is that the amount of catalyst introduced into an amorphous silicon film can be more easily controlled not only because it is possible to control the amount of catalyst in the carrier film but, in the case of a nickel catalyst incorporated into a silicon oxide carrier, also because the diffusion coefficient of nickel in the silicon oxide is relatively small.

The above and other aspects of the present invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims and will be described in the following by reference to specific examples which are illustrated by the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 1A-1C show a process for obtaining a crystalline silicon film in accordance with Example 1 of the invention;

Figs. 2A-2C show a process for obtaining a crystalline silicon film in accordance with Example 2 of the invention;

Figs. 3A and 3B show a process for obtaining a crystalline silicon film in accordance with Example 3 of the invention;

Figs. 4A-4D show a process for obtaining a crystalline silicon film in accordance with Example 4 of the invention;

Figs. 5A-5E show a process of manufacturing a TFT in accordance with Example 5 of the invention;

Figs. 6A-6F show a process of manufacturing a TFT in accordance with Example 6 of the inven-

tion;

Figs. 7A-7D show a process of manufacturing a TFT in accordance with Example 7 of the invention; and

Fig. 8 is an example of an integrated circuit substrate used in an active matrix liquid crystal device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXAMPLES

[Example 1]

In this example, an OCD solution in which a catalyst material is contained is coated onto an amorphous silicon film to form silicon oxide and then crystallization is performed.

Referring to Fig. 1A, a substrate 11 is a Corning 7059 glass having a dimension 100 mm x 100 mm. Initially, an amorphous silicon film 12 is formed by a known plasma CVD or LPCVD method to a thickness of 100-1500 Å, for example, 1000 Å.

The formed amorphous silicon film 12 is treated with a hydrofluoric acid in order to remove contaminants or natural oxide formed thereon. Subsequently, an oxide film 13 which contains nickel as a catalyst element is formed in the following manner.

Initially, an OCD solution (OCD Type 2 Si 59000 produced by Tokyo Ohka) is prepared. Also, nickel(II) acetylacetonate is dissolved in methyl acetate. These solutions are mixed in such a manner that the concentration of SiO₂ is controlled to be 2.0 weight % and that of nickel is 200-2000 ppm. This means that the ratio of nickel with respect to silicon oxide in the film is 1 : 0.1 to 1 : 0.01.

A quantity of 10 ml of the foregoing mixed solution is dropped onto the surface of the amorphous silicon film 12 following which the substrate is rotated at 2000 rpm for 15 seconds by means of a spinner 15 to perform spin coating. Then, prebaking is performed at 250 °C for 30 minutes in order to obtain a silicon oxide film 13 having a thickness of 1300 Å which contains nickel therein. The temperature of the prebaking may be determined depending upon the decomposition temperature of the nickel compound used. Also, the thickness of the silicon oxide film can be arbitrarily determined by controlling the rotation speed of the spin coating or the concentration of the silicon oxide with respect to the solution. The inventors consider from their experiments that a thickness of 200-1300 Å is appropriate.

Then, the above structure is heated in a furnace at 550 °C for 4 hours in a nitrogen atmosphere. As a result, a silicon film 12 having good crystallinity is obtained on the substrate 11. The temperature of this heat treatment is preferably 450 °C or higher. If it is below 450 °C, the time of the heat treatment has to be lengthened so that productivity is reduced. Also, when the temperature is higher than 550 °C, care

should be taken concerning the heat resistivity of the glass substrate.

It is to be understood that the silicon oxide film containing the catalyst element may be formed below the amorphous silicon film. In such a case, the mixed solution abovementioned is coated on the substrate so as to form a catalyst containing silicon oxide film on the substrate, following which an amorphous silicon film is formed. In this case, the silicon oxide film may have a function of a blocking layer on the glass substrate.

Also, the concentration of nickel in the OCD solution should be determined depending upon the concentration of SiO_2 in the solution. It is necessary to take into consideration that the amount of nickel which diffuses from the silicon oxide film into the silicon is influenced by the time and the temperature during the heat annealing.

[Example 2]

In this example, a silicon oxide film containing nickel is selectively formed on an amorphous silicon film.

Referring to Fig. 2A, a Corning 7059 glass of 10 centimeters square is used as a substrate 21. An amorphous silicon film 22 is formed on the substrate 21 through a known plasma CVD method to 1000 Å thickness.

After treating the amorphous silicon film 22 with hydrofluoric acid to remove contaminants or natural oxide formed thereon, a silicon oxide film 23 containing nickel is formed on a selected portion of the film in a manner described below.

Initially, nickel(II) acetylacetonate is directly mixed in an OCD solution (OCD Type 2 Si 20000 produced by Tokyo Ohka). The concentration of the nickel element in the OCD solution is controlled to be 200 - 2000 ppm.

10 ml of the above solution is dropped onto the surface of the amorphous silicon film 22 following which spin coating is carried out using a spinner at 2000 rpm for 15 seconds. A nickel containing silicon oxide film 23 of 300 Å thick is formed by prebaking at 250 °C for 30 minutes. The temperature of the prebaking is determined in view of the fact that the decomposition of the nickel(II) acetylacetonate is completed at about 235°C. Furthermore, if the temperature of the prebaking is too high, the nickel element tends to diffuse into the amorphous silicon film during the prebaking.

Then the silicon oxide film 23 is patterned into a desired pattern by a known photolithography process.

The patterning is easily done using 1/100 HF because the etching rate of the silicon oxide film 23 formed from the OCD solution is as fast as several tens of angstroms per second. Accordingly, the silicon

oxide film can be patterned without damaging the silicon film 22. As a result, a pattern of silicon oxide film 23 is formed on a selected portion of the amorphous silicon film to which nickel is introduced as shown in Fig. 2B. Also, it is possible to use dry etching if one wishes to obtain a more excellent pattern.

Then, a photoresist (not shown) which was used in the above patterning is removed and the surface is washed with a very weak hydrofluoric acid solution (less than 1/100). The strength of the hydrofluoric acid solution should be such that it does not damage the silicon oxide film 23.

Then, the above structure is furnace annealed at 550 °C for 4 hours in a nitrogen atmosphere in order to crystallize the silicon film 22 in the same manner as in Example 1. However, the crystal growth in the present example differs from Example 1 in that the crystals grow laterally from a region 24 toward a region 25 as shown by arrows in Fig. 2C. The region 24 denotes a region into which the nickel is directly introduced from the silicon oxide film formed thereon.

The region 25 denotes a region into which the nickel was not directly introduced. The direction of the crystal growth in the lateral growth region is substantially aligned with an axis of [111].

The concentration of the nickel in the region 24 can be controlled within a range of 1×10^{16} to 1×10^{19} atoms/cm³ by controlling the density of the solution, the heat treatment temperature and time. The concentration of the nickel in the region 25 is less than that. Also, it should be noted that the concentration of the nickel in the silicon film is hardly influenced by the thickness of the silicon oxide film if the thickness is larger than a certain value. This is because the diffusion coefficient of nickel within the silicon oxide is very small so that it is only a portion of the silicon oxide film ranging several tens of angstroms in the vicinity of the interface with the silicon film 22 from which nickel diffuses into the silicon film as a catalyst.

The crystalline silicon film thus obtained has an improved resistivity against hydrofluoric acid as compared with the case in which nickel is introduced through a plasma treatment. For example, when it is necessary to pattern a silicon oxide film which is formed over a crystalline silicon film as an interlayer insulator or a gate insulator to form a contact hole, a buffer hydrofluoric acid is usually used as an etchant. If the crystalline silicon film does not have enough resistance against the hydrofluoric acid, it is difficult to selectively remove only the silicon oxide film without damaging the silicon film. However, in the case of the present invention, a large selection ratio (i.e. the difference in the etching rate of the silicon oxide film and the crystalline silicon film) can be obtained so as to remove the silicon oxide film alone.

As said above, the lateral growth region has a smaller concentration of catalyst element and has ex-

cellent crystallinity. Therefore, this region can be used as an active region of a semiconductor device such as a thin film transistor.

[Example 3]

Another example of selectively introducing a catalyst element will be described in this example. Referring to Fig. 3A, an amorphous silicon film 32 is formed on a glass substrate 31 to a thickness of 1000 Å through a known plasma CVD. Then, a silicon oxide film 33 is formed to a thickness of 1000 Å following which it is patterned to form a mask.

After removing contaminants or natural oxide from the surface by using hydrofluoric acid, a silicon oxide film 34 which contains nickel as a catalyst is formed in a manner described below.

Initially, a 2-ethyl hexanoic acid nickel solution is mixed into an OCD solution (OCD Type 2 Si 59000 produced by Tokyo Ohka) in such a manner that the concentration of SiO₂ in the solution is 4.0 wt% and that of nickel is 200 - 2000 ppm.

An amount of 10 ml of the above solution is dropped onto a surface of amorphous silicon film 32 following which a spin coating is performed using a spinner at 2000 rpm for 15 seconds. As a result, the step caused by the mask 33 is almost removed from the surface. Then, prebaking is performed at 350 °C for 60 minutes in order to form a silicon oxide film 34 which contains nickel. During the prebaking, the nickel diffuses into the amorphous silicon film 32 from the region 35. Accordingly, the amount of nickel diffused into the silicon film may be controlled by changing the time and temperature of the prebaking.

After the above prebaking, the silicon oxide film 34 is removed if necessary to leave the portion 35 of the silicon film as shown in Fig. 3B. Also, the region 35 contains nickel at a very high concentration. The silicon oxide film 34 which is formed from an OCD solution can be easily removed as said before.

Then, the amorphous silicon film 32 is crystallized by heating at 550°C for 4 hours in a nitrogen atmosphere. At this time, crystals grow from a region 36 to a region 37 as shown by arrows in the figure. The region 36 is a region into which the nickel is directly introduced while the region 37 is a region to which the nickel is not directly introduced.

A surface of the region 37 of the crystalline silicon film has a {111} plane. This is because the crystal growth occurs in the region 37 with its surface covered with the silicon oxide film. On the other hand, the lateral growth region 25 in Example 2 does not have a {111} plane. This is because the crystal growth occurs in the region 25 with its surface uncovered, namely, the surface is a free surface.

[Example 4]

In this example, a crystallized silicon film formed in accordance with the present invention is further irradiated with a laser light to improve crystallinity. Referring to Fig. 4A, an amorphous silicon film 42 is formed to a thickness of 1000 Å by a known plasma CVD on a Corning 7059 glass substrate 41 of a 10 centimeters square.

After treating the amorphous silicon film 44 with hydrofluoric acid to remove contaminants or natural oxide formed thereon, a silicon oxide film 43 containing nickel is formed on a selected portion of the film in a manner described below.

Initially, nickel(II) acetylacetonate is directly mixed in an OCD solution (OCD Type 2 Si 20000 produced by Tokyo Ohka). The concentration of the nickel element in the OCD solution is controlled to be 200 - 2000 ppm.

10 ml of the above solution is dropped onto the surface of the amorphous silicon film 22 following which a spin coating is carried out using a spinner at 2000 rpm for 15 seconds. A nickel containing silicon oxide film 43 of 1300 Å thick is formed by a prebaking at 250°C for 30 minutes. The temperature of the prebaking is determined in view of the fact that the decomposition of the nickel(II) acetylacetonate is completed at about 235°C. However, if the temperature of the prebaking is too high, the nickel element tends to diffuse into the amorphous silicon film during the prebaking.

Then the silicon oxide film 43 is patterned into a desired pattern through a known photolithography process. The patterning is easily done using 1/100 HF because the etching rate of the silicon oxide film 43 formed from the OCD solution is as fast as several tens of angstroms per second. Accordingly, the silicon oxide film can be patterned without damaging the silicon oxide film 42. As a result, a pattern of silicon oxide film 43 is formed on a selected portion of the amorphous silicon film to which nickel is introduced as shown in Fig. 4B.

Then, a photoresist which was used in the above patterning step is removed and the surface is washed with a very dilute hydrofluoric acid solution (less than 1/100). The strength of the hydrofluoric acid solution should be such that it does not damage the silicon oxide film 43.

Then, the above structure is furnace annealed at 550°C for 4 hours in a nitrogen atmosphere in order to crystallize the silicon film 42. The crystals grow laterally from a region 44 toward a region 45 as shown by the arrows in Fig. 4C. The region 44 denotes a region into which the nickel is directly introduced by the silicon oxide film formed thereon while the region 45 denotes a region into which the nickel was not directly introduced. The direction of the crystal growth in the lateral growth region is substantially aligned with the

crystalline axis of [111].

The concentration of the nickel in the region 44 can be controlled within a range of 1×10^{18} to 1×10^{19} atoms/cm³ by controlling the density of the solution, the heat treatment temperature and time. The concentration of the nickel in the region 45 can be made less than that. Also, it should be noted that the concentration of the nickel in the silicon film is hardly influenced by the thickness of the silicon oxide film if the thickness is larger than a certain value.

In the present example, the entire surface of the crystallized silicon film thus obtained is further irradiated with a laser light 46 as shown in Fig. 4D in order to further increase the crystallinity. For example, a KrF excimer laser (wavelength: 248 nm) with a power density 200 mJ/cm² to 350 mJ/cm², for example, 350 mJ/cm² is used:

At this irradiation, since the region 44 to which the nickel is directly introduced is poorer in resistivity against laser irradiation than the region 45, the silicon oxide film 43 functions as a blocking layer against the laser light.

Also, when the laser irradiation is performed with the silicon oxide film 43 formed thereon, it is desirable not to heat the substrate so much in order to prevent nickel from diffusing from the silicon oxide film 43 into the silicon film. For example, the substrate should be maintained at a temperature not higher than 300 °C. Alternatively, if the silicon oxide film 43 is removed before the laser irradiation, the substrate may be heated to a higher temperature during the laser irradiation. However, the intensity of the laser beam has to be controlled in order not to damage the region 44.

Thus, it is possible to further increase the crystallinity of the silicon film as compared with the case in which only a laser irradiation is used for crystallization.

Also, instead of a laser, it is possible to use other intense light sources such as a flash lamp, in particular, infrared ray irradiation. Since infrared ray is not so absorbed by a glass substrate, it is possible to heat only the silicon film. This irradiation is generally called rapid thermal annealing (RTA) or rapid thermal process (RTP).

[Example 5]

An example of manufacturing a TFT as a pixel TFT in accordance with the present invention will be described in this example. The TFT can be used as a switching element which is provided in each pixel of an active matrix liquid crystal device. Also, the TFT may be used in a so called thin film integrated circuit.

Referring to Fig. 5A, a glass substrate 11 having a silicon oxide layer of 2000 Å (not shown) as an impurity blocking layer is prepared. On the substrate, an amorphous silicon film 104 is formed to 1000 Å thick

through a known plasma CVD. On the amorphous silicon film 104, a nickel containing silicon oxide film 100 is formed in the same manner as described in Example 1.

The amorphous silicon film is crystallized by heat annealing with the silicon oxide 100 formed thereon. After the crystallization, the silicon oxide film 100 is removed by using a buffer hydrofluoric acid, following which the crystalline silicon film is patterned into a silicon island 116 as shown in Fig 5B. Source, drain and channel regions are to be formed in the silicon island 116.

Then, referring to Fig. 5B, a silicon oxide film 105 is formed to a thickness of 200 - 1500 Å, for example, 1000 Å as a gate insulating film. The silicon oxide film 105 is deposited by means of RF plasma CVD process using TEOS (tetraethoxysilane). That is, TEOS is decomposed and then deposited together with oxygen at a substrate temperature of 150 to 600°C, preferably in the range of 300 to 450°C. The pressure ratio of TEOS and oxygen is 1:1 to 1:3 with a total pressure of 0.05 to 0.5 Torr. An RF power is 100 to 250 W. Otherwise, the silicon oxide film can be formed by reduced pressure CVD or normal pressure CVD using TEOS as the starting gas together with gaseous ozone, while maintaining the substrate temperature in the range of from 350 to 600°C, preferably, in the range of from 400 to 550°C. The film thus deposited is annealed in oxygen or under ozone in the temperature range from 400 to 600°C for a duration of from 30 to 60 minutes.

Then, optionally, a KrF excimer laser (wavelength 248 nm, pulse width 20 nsec) or an intense light equivalent thereto is irradiated in order to improve the crystallinity. In particular, an application of RTA (rapid thermal annealing) using infrared radiation is particularly effective because the silicon film can be heated selectively without heating the glass substrate. Moreover, RTA is especially useful in the fabrication of insulated gate field effect semiconductor devices because it decreases the interface level between a silicon layer and a silicon oxide film.

Subsequently, an aluminum film is deposited to a thickness of 2,000 Å to 1 μm through an electron beam evaporation, and is patterned to form a gate electrode 106. The aluminum film may contain scandium at 0.15 - 0.2 weight %. The substrate is then immersed into an ethylene glycol solution controlled to a pH of about 7 and containing 1 to 3% tartaric acid to effect an anodic oxidation using platinum as a cathode and the aluminum gate electrode as an anode. The anodic oxidation is effected by first increasing the voltage to 220 V at a constant rate, and then holding the voltage at 220 V for 1 hour to complete the oxidation. During maintaining the constant current condition, the voltage is preferably increased at a rate of from 2 to 5 V/minute. An anodic oxide 109 is formed at a thickness of from 1,500 to 3,500 Å, for example,

2,000 Å.

Then, referring to Fig. 5C, phosphorous ions are introduced into a portion of the silicon island by an ion doping method (also called plasma doping) using the gate electrode portion as a mask in a self-alignment manner. As a doping gas, phosphine (PH_3) is used. The dose amount is $1 - 4 \times 10^{15}$ atoms/cm². Further, a KrF excimer laser (wavelength 248 nm, pulse width 20 nsec) is irradiated in order to cure the crystallinity which has been damaged due to the ion doping. The energy density of the laser is 150-400 mJ/cm², preferably, 200 - 250 mJ/cm². Thus, n-type impurity regions 108 and 109 are formed. The sheet resistance in these regions is 200 - 800 Ω/square.

This step of laser annealing can be replaced by an RTA process, i.e., a rapid thermal annealing process using a flash lamp, which comprises elevating the temperature of the silicon film rapidly to a range of from 1,000 to 1,200 °C (as measured on the silicon monitor).

Referring to Fig. 5D, a silicon oxide film is deposited thereafter to a thickness of 3,000 Å as an interlayer insulator 110 by means of plasma CV using TEOS together with oxygen, or by means of reduced pressure CVD or normal pressure CVD using TEOS together with ozone. The substrate temperature is in the range of 250 to 450° C, for instance, 350°C. A smooth surface is obtained thereafter by mechanically polishing the resulting silicon oxide film. An ITO coating is deposited thereon by sputtering, and is patterned to provide a pixel electrode 111.

The interlayer insulator 110 is etched to form contact holes in the source/drain as shown in Fig. 5E, and interconnections 112 and 113 are formed using chromium or titanium nitride to connect the interconnection 113 to the pixel electrode 111.

Since the crystalline silicon film formed in the present invention has a sufficient resistance against hydrofluoric acid, it is possible to use a hydrofluoric acid aqueous solution of 10 ppm aqueous to form the contact holes with a good reliability.

Finally, the structure is annealed in hydrogen in a temperature range of 300 to 400 °C for 0.1 to 2 hours to hydrogenize the silicon film. Thus, a TFT is manufactured. A plurality of TFTs having the same structure may be simultaneously formed on the same substrate in order to form an active matrix circuit of a liquid crystal device. The TFT shown in Fig. 5E has source and drain regions 108 and 109 and a channel region 114. Also, the reference numeral 115 shows an NI junction.

In accordance with the present example, the concentration of the nickel contained in the active layer is in the range of 1×10^{16} to 3×10^{18} atoms/cm³.

[Example 6]

In this example, an active region of a semicon-

ductor device is formed by using a region of a crystalline silicon film in which crystals grow in a lateral direction (i.e. parallel with a substrate surface). By using such a region, it is possible to reduce the concentration of catalyst element in the active region. Thus, electrical characteristics and reliability of a device can be improved.

This example is particularly directed to the manufacture of a TFT used to control a pixel of an active matrix device. Figs. 6A-6F are cross sectional views for showing the manufacture of the TFT in accordance with this example.

Referring to Fig. 6A, a substrate 201 is washed and provided with a silicon oxide film 202 on its surface. The silicon oxide film 202 is formed through a plasma CVD with oxygen and tetraethoxysilane used as starting gases. The thickness of the silicon oxide film is 2000 Å, for example. Then, an amorphous silicon film 203 of an intrinsic type of a thickness of 500-1500 Å, for example, 1000 Å is formed on the silicon oxide film 202, following which a silicon oxide film 205 of 500 - 2000 Å, for example 1000 Å is formed on the amorphous silicon film successively. Further, the silicon oxide film 205 is selectively etched in order to form an opening 206 at which the amorphous silicon film is exposed.

Then, a silicon oxide film 207 containing nickel is formed for promoting crystallization of silicon is formed in the same manner as in Example 3.

After the prebaking as discussed in Example 3, the silicon oxide film 207 is removed and the substrate is annealed at 500 - 620 °C for 4 hours in a nitrogen atmosphere to crystallize the silicon film 203. The crystallization starts from the region under the opening 206 where the silicon film directly contacts the nickel containing silicon oxide film and further proceeds in a direction parallel with the substrate. In the figure, a reference numeral 204 indicates a region of the silicon film where the silicon film is directly added with nickel and crystallized while a reference numeral 203 indicates a portion where the crystal grows in a lateral direction. The crystals grown in the lateral direction are about 25 μm in length. Also, the direction of the crystal growth is approximately along the crystalline axis of [111].

After the crystallization, the silicon oxide film 205 is removed. At this time, an oxide film which exists on the silicon film in the opening 206 is simultaneously removed. Further, the silicon film is patterned by dry etching to form an active layer 208 in the form of an island as shown in Fig. 6B. It should be noted that the nickel is contained in the silicon film at a higher concentration not only under the opening 206 where the nickel is directly added but also at a portion where top ends of the crystals exist. The patterning of the silicon film should be done in such a manner that the patterned silicon film 208 should not include such portions in which nickel is contained at a higher concen-

tration.

Referring to Fig. 6B, the patterned active layer 208 is then exposed to an atmosphere containing 100 % aqueous vapor of 10 atm at 500 - 600 °C, typically, 550 °C for one hour in order to oxidize the surface thereof and thus to form a silicon oxide film 209 of 1000 Å.

After the oxidation, the substrate is maintained in an ammonium atmosphere (1 atm, 100 %) at 400 °C. At this condition, the silicon oxide film 209 is irradiated with an infrared light having an intensity peak at a wavelength in the range of 0.6 - 4 µm, for example, 0.8 - 1.4 µm for 30 - 180 seconds in order to nitride the silicon oxide film 209. HCl may be added to the atmosphere at 0.1 to 10 %. A halogen lamp is used as a light source of the infrared light. The intensity of the IR light is controlled so that a temperature on the surface of a monitoring single crystalline silicon wafer is set between 900 - 1200°C. More specifically, the temperature is monitored by means of a thermocouple embedded in a single crystal silicon wafer and is transferred back to the IR light source (feed back). In the present example, the temperature rising rate is kept constant in the range of 50 - 200°C/sec. and also the substrate is cooled naturally at 20 - 100°C/sec. Since the IR light can heat the silicon film selectively, it is possible to minimize the heating of the glass substrate.

Referring to Fig. 6C, an aluminum film is formed by sputtering to a thickness of 3000 - 8000 Å, for example, 6000 Å and then patterned into a gate electrode 210. The aluminum film may preferably contain scandium at 0.01 - 0.2 %.

Then, as shown in Fig. 6D, the surface of the aluminum electrode is anodic oxidized to form an anodic oxide film 211. The anodic oxidation is performed in an ethylene glycol solution containing a tartaric acid at 1-5 %. The thickness of the anodic oxide film is 2000 Å. The thickness of the anodic oxide film 211 will determine the thickness of an offset gate area as discussed below.

Referring then to Fig. 6E, using the gate electrode and the surrounding anodic oxide film as a mask, an N-type conductivity impurity (phosphorous, here) is introduced into the active layer in a self-aligning manner by ion doping method in order to form impurity regions 212 and 213. Phosphine (PH₃) is used as a dopant gas. The acceleration voltage is 60 - 90 kV, for example, 80 kV. The dose amount is 1×10^{15} - 8×10^{15} cm⁻², for example, 4×10^{15} cm⁻². As can be seen in the drawing, the impurity regions 212 and 213 are offset from the gate electrode by a distance "x". This configuration is advantageous for reducing a leak current (off current) which occurs when applying a reverse bias voltage (i.e. a negative voltage in the case of an NTFT) to the gate electrode. In particular, since it is desired that electric charges stored in a pixel electrode be maintained without leaking in or

der to obtain an excellent display, the offset configuration is particularly advantageous when the TFT is used for switching a pixel of an active matrix as is the case in the present example.

Thereafter, an annealing is performed with a laser irradiation. As a laser, a KrF excimer laser (wavelength: 248 nm, pulse width: 20 nsec.) or other lasers may be used. The conditions of the laser irradiation in the case of KrF excimer laser are: energy density is 200 - 400 mJ/cm², for example, 250 mJ/cm², a number of shots is 2 - 10 shots per one site, for example, 2 shots. Preferably, the substrate is heated to 200 - 450°C to enhance the effect of the irradiation.

Referring to Fig. 6F, an interlayer insulating film 214 of silicon oxide is formed through a plasma CVD to a thickness of 6000 Å. Further, a transparent polyimide film 215 is formed by spin coating to obtain a leveled surface. Then, a transparent conductive film made of indium tin oxide for example is formed on the leveled surface by sputtering to a thickness of 800 Å and patterned into a pixel electrode 216.

The interlayer insulating films 214 and 215 are provided with contact holes therethrough, through which electrode/wirings 217 and 218 are formed to contact the impurity regions of the TFT. The electrode/wirings 217 and 218 are formed of a metallic material, for example, a multi-layer of titanium nitride and aluminum. Finally, an annealing in a hydrogen atmosphere of 1 atm is carried out at 350°C for 30 minutes in order to complete a pixel circuit of an active matrix circuit having TFTs.

[Example 7]

This example is directed to manufacture of a TFT and will be described with reference to Figs. 7A - 7D.

Referring to Fig. 11A, a base film 502 of silicon oxide is initially formed on a Corning 7059 substrate 501 by sputtering to 2000 Å thick. The substrate is preferably annealed at a temperature higher than a distortion point of the substrate following which the glass is cooled to a temperature less than the distortion point at a rate of 0.1 - 1.0°C/minute. Thereby, it is possible to reduce a contraction of the substrate due to a substrate heating which occurs later (for example, thermal oxidation, thermal annealing), as a result, a mask alignment process will be facilitated. This step may be performed either before or after the formation of the base film 502 or it may be done both before and after the formation of the base film 502. In the case of using the Corning 7059 substrate, the substrate is heated at 620 - 660 °C for 1 - 4 hours, following which it is cooled at 0.1 - 0.3 °C per minute and taken out from a furnace when the temperature decreases to 400 - 500 °C.

Then, an intrinsic (I-type) amorphous silicon film is formed to 500 - 1500 Å thick, for example, 1000 Å through a known plasma CVD. The amorphous silicon

film is crystallized in the same manner as in Example 1. Therefore, redundant explanation will be omitted.

After the crystallization, the silicon film is patterned into an island form of 10 - 1000 microns square. Accordingly, a crystalline silicon film 503 in the form of an island is formed as an active layer of a TFT as shown in Fig. 7A.

Referring to Fig. 7B, the surface of the silicon film is oxidized by exposing the surface to an oxidizing atmosphere to form an oxide film 504. The oxidizing atmosphere contains an aqueous vapor at 70 - 90 %. The pressure and the temperature of the atmosphere is 1 atm and 500 - 750 °C, typically 600 °C.

The atmosphere is produced by a pyrogenic reaction from oxygen and hydrogen gases with a hydrogen/oxygen ratio being 1.5 - 1.9. The silicon film is exposed to the thus formed atmosphere for 3 - 5 hours. As a result, the oxide film 209 having a thickness of 500 - 1500 Å, for example, 1000 Å is formed. Since the surface of the silicon film is reduced (eaten) by 50 Å or more due to the oxidation, an influence of a contamination of the upper most surface of the silicon film does not extend to the silicon/silicon oxide interface. In other words, by the oxidation, it is possible to obtain a clean silicon/silicon oxide interface. Also, since the thickness of the silicon oxide film is two times the thickness of the portion of the silicon film to be oxidized, when the silicon film is originally 1000 Å thick and the obtained silicon oxide film is 1000 Å thick, the thickness of the silicon film remaining after the oxidation is 500 Å.

Generally, the thinner a silicon oxide film (a gate insulating film) and an active layer are, the higher a mobility is and the smaller an off current is. On the other hand, a preliminary crystallization of an amorphous silicon film is easier when its thickness is thicker. Accordingly, there is a contradiction in the crystallization process and electrical characteristics with respect to the thickness of the active layer. The present example solves this problem. That is, the amorphous silicon film having a larger thickness is initially formed so that a better crystalline silicon film can be obtained, following which the thickness of the silicon film is reduced by the oxidation, resulting in an improvement of characteristics of the active layer of a TFT. Moreover, an amorphous component or grain boundaries contained in the crystalline silicon film tend to be oxidized during the thermal oxidation, resulting in a decrease in recombination centers contained in the active layer. As a result, the production yield can also be improved.

After the formation of the silicon oxide film 209 through thermal oxidation, the substrate is annealed in a 100 % monoxide dinitrogen atmosphere at 1 atm and 600° C for 2 hours.

Referring to Fig. 6C, silicon containing 0.01 to 0.2 % phosphorous is deposited through low pressure CVD to 3000 - 8000 Å thick, for example, 6000 Å, and

then patterned into a gate electrode 505. Further, using the gate electrode 505 as a mask, an N-type conductivity impurity is added into a portion of the active layer in a self-aligning manner by ion doping. Phosphine is used as a dopant gas. The acceleration voltage is 60 - 90 kV, for example, 80 kV. The dose amount is, 1×10^{15} to 8×10^{15} atoms/cm² for example, 5×10^{15} cm². Thus, N-type impurity regions 506 and 507 are formed. Also, a channel region 511 is simultaneously formed in a selfaligning manner.

Thereafter, an annealing is performed with a KrF excimer laser (wavelength 248 nm, pulse width 20 nsec). The laser annealing may be replaced by a lamp annealing with a near infrared ray. The near infrared ray is absorbed by crystalline silicon more effectively than by amorphous silicon. Accordingly, the use of a near infrared ray is comparable with a thermal annealing at 1000 °C or more. On the other hand, it is possible to prevent the glass substrate from being detrimentally heated inasmuch as the near infrared ray is not so absorbed by the glass substrate. That is, while a far infrared ray is absorbed by a glass substrate, visible or near infrared ray of which wavelength ranges from 0.5 - 4 μm are not so absorbed. Accordingly, it is possible to anneal the silicon film for a short duration without heating the glass substrate and causing a contraction.

Referring to Fig. 7D, an interlayer insulating film 508 of silicon oxide is formed to 6000 Å thick by plasma CVD. A polyimide may be used instead of silicon oxide. Further, contact holes are formed through the insulating film. Electrode/wirings 509 and 510 are formed through the contact holes by using a multilayer of titanium nitride and aluminum films. Finally, an annealing in a hydrogen atmosphere is conducted at 350°C and 1 atm for 30 minutes. Thus, a TFT is completed.

The mobility of the thus formed TFT is 110 - 150 cm²/Vs. The S value is 0.2 - 0.5 V/digit. Also, in the case of forming a P-channel type TFT by doping boron into source and drain regions, the mobility is 90 - 120 CM²/VS and the S value is 0.4 - 0.6 V/digit. The mobility in accordance with the present example can be increased by 20 % or more and the S value can be reduced by 20 % or more as compared with a case where a gate insulating film is formed by a known PVD or CVD.

Also, the reliability of the TFT in accordance with the present example is comparable to that of a TFT which is produced through a thermal oxidation at a temperature as high as 1000°C.

[Example 8]

Fig. 8 shows an example of an active matrix type liquid crystal device in accordance with the present example.

In the figure, reference numeral 61 shows a glass

substrate, and 63 shows a pixel area having a plurality of pixels of several hundreds x several hundreds in the form of a matrix each of which is provided with a TFT as a switching element. Reference numeral 62 shows peripheral driver region(s) in which a driver circuit and a decoder circuit are formed by using TFTs for driving the TFTs of the pixel area. The pixel area 63 and the driver region 62 are united on the same substrate 61.

The TFTs provided in the driver region 62 need to have a high mobility in order to allow a large amount of electric current to pass therethrough. Also the TFTs provided in the pixel area 63 need to have a lower leak current property in order to increase a charge retention ability of pixel electrodes. For example, the TFTs for the driver circuit in the peripheral area can be manufactured in accordance with the present invention while the TFTs for the pixel area is not intentionally added with a catalyst. Namely, an amorphous silicon film is initially formed on the entire surface of the substrate. Then, the catalyst such as nickel is selectively introduced only to the peripheral region of the semiconductor layer in accordance with the present invention. After the heat crystallization, only the peripheral region of the semiconductor layer is mainly crystallized while the pixel region of the semiconductor layer is not crystallized. However, there may be some diffusion of nickel from the peripheral region into the pixel region but the amount of this diffusion is insignificant. Then, the entire region of the semiconductor layer is irradiated with a laser light in order to increase the crystallinity, following which the semiconductor layer is patterned into respective silicon islands to form transistors. Thereby, it is possible to manufacture a driver circuit using higher crystallinity TFTs and an active matrix circuit using lower crystallinity TFTs on one substrate.

[Example 9]

This example is directed to an improved method for forming a film which is added with a catalyst onto an amorphous silicon film more uniformly. The inventors were aware of a problem that when a solution containing for example nickel or nickel compound as a catalyst is applied onto an amorphous silicon, there is a tendency that the surface of the amorphous silicon film repels the solution so that the uniformity of the coating is not so good. The inventors discovered that when there is a very thin oxide film on the amorphous silicon film, it is possible to improve the wettability of the surface and therefore the solution may be coated more uniformly.

The oxide film should be enough thin so that the nickel can penetrate through the oxide film. The appropriate thickness is, for example, about 10 Å. Also, the oxide film may be formed by a UV oxidation or thermal oxidation.

For example, in the case of a UV oxidation, a surface of an amorphous silicon film is exposed to a UV light in an oxygen gas for 3 to 5 minutes. The temperature of the substrate may be room temperature.

However, it is desirable to heat the substrate to a temperature at which ozone starts to decompose to form oxygen radical, namely, about 200°C. In such a case, the time required for the oxidation is shorter than the case of the room temperature by about 1 minute.

Alternatively, the oxide film may be formed by immersing the substrate having the amorphous silicon formed thereon into a hydrogen peroxide solution at 70°C for 5 minutes. Preferably, the hydrogen peroxide solution is mixed with ammonium for the purpose of cleaning the surface. Instead of ammonium, it is possible to add sulfuric acid or hydrochloric acid.

In any event, the wettability of the silicon film is increased by the provision of the thin oxide film. This method is applicable not only to the method using a solution for forming silicon oxide such as OCD as disclosed in the Examples 1 to 7 but also applicable to other methods in which nickel or a nickel compound is dissolved by a solvent such as water or alcohol and this solution is added onto the amorphous silicon film.

Although a silicon oxide film is disclosed as a most preferred example for holding a catalyst element therein, other materials may be used instead of silicon oxide as long as they can endure a high temperature, for example, an alumina film may be used by dissolving fine particles of alumina in an organic solvent to form an alumina film instead of silicon oxide. Also, an organic film such as photoresist material may be used to suspend a catalyst element therein. Also, while the examples are directed only to manufacture of a TFT of a coplanar type, it is to be understood that other known types of transistors such as a bottom gate type transistor may be manufactured in accordance with the present invention. The invention is of course applicable also to the manufacture of other silicon semiconductor devices such as diodes, photosensors, etc comprising crystalline silicon semiconductor material in which at least one electrical junction such as a PN, PI, or NI junction is formed.

The invention having been described in the foregoing by reference to specific examples, it is to be well understood that modifications and variations will occur to those possessed of the relevant skill and knowledge without departure from the ambit of the present invention. Thus, for example, whereas in the foregoing the catalyst containing film or layer has mostly been described as being formed by a process wherein the catalyst is incorporated into a liquid or fluid carrier which is then applied to the silicon surface in order to form thereon a solid phase catalyst containing layer, and indeed this is the preferred and most convenient way of forming the catalyst containing film or layer, the present invention is not to be re-

garded as restricted to such a process. The solid phase catalyst containing layer could possibly be formed on the silicon film by other methods and the gist of the present invention is the formation of the solid phase catalyst containing layer and not the process by which it is formed.

Claims

1. A method for enhancing the crystallinity of a silicon layer comprising:
 - disposing in contact with a semiconductor layer comprising silicon a film which contains a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor layer;
 - diffusing said metal or metal compound into said semiconductor film by heating; and
 - annealing said semiconductor layer in order to enhance the crystallinity of said semiconductor layer.
2. A method for enhancing the crystallinity of a silicon layer comprising the steps of:
 - disposing in contact with a semiconductor layer comprising silicon a film which contains a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor layer; and
 - annealing said semiconductor layer in order to crystallize said semiconductor layer, wherein said metal or metal compound diffusing into said semiconductor film during crystallization.
3. The method of claim 1 or 2 wherein said metal is selected from the group consisting of Pd, Pt, Cu, Ag, Au, In, Sn, Pb, P, As, Sb and Ni.
4. The method of claim 1 or 2 or 3 wherein said semiconductor layer is amorphous.
5. The method of any preceding claim wherein said film is disposed between a substrate and said semiconductor layer.
6. The method of any of claims 1 to 4 wherein said film is formed on said semiconductor layer.
7. The method of any preceding claim wherein said annealing is performed at a temperature not higher than 500°C.
8. The method of any preceding claim wherein said film comprises silicon oxide.
9. A method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:
 - forming a semiconductor layer comprising

silicon on a substrate;

coating said semiconductor layer with a liquid precursor material for forming silicon oxide, wherein said liquid precursor material incorporating a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor layer;

prebaking said substrate in order to form a film comprising silicon oxide from said liquid precursor; and

annealing said semiconductor layer in order to crystallize said semiconductor layer, said metal or metal compound diffusing through said semiconductor film during crystallization.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said liquid precursor material comprises an organic solvent.
11. The method of claim 9 or 10 wherein said liquid precursor material is coated on said semiconductor layer by spin coating.
12. The method of any preceding claim further comprising increasing the crystallinity of said semiconductor layer by irradiating the same with light after said annealing.
13. A method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:
 - forming a semiconductor layer comprising silicon on a substrate, said semiconductor layer having at least a first region and a second region adjacent to each other;
 - forming a film containing a catalyst for promoting crystallization of said semiconductor film on only the first region of said semiconductor layer; diffusing said catalyst into the first region of said semiconductor layer; and
 - heating said semiconductor layer so that said catalyst diffuses from the first region of said semiconductor layer into the second region of said semiconductor layer adjacent thereto, thereby crystallizing said second region of the semiconductor layer.
14. The method of claim 13 wherein said film mainly comprises silicon oxide.
15. The method of claim 13 or 14 wherein crystals grow in said second region in a direction substantially parallel with a surface of said substrate.
16. The method of claim 13 or 14 or 15 further comprising removing said first region after crystallization thereof and retaining said second region for use as an active region of said semiconductor device within said second region.

17. A method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising:

preparing a liquid precursor material for forming silicon oxide, wherein said precursor material incorporates a metal or a metal compound capable of promoting crystallization of silicon;

forming a semiconductor film comprising silicon on a substrate;

coating said precursor material onto said semiconductor film;

prebaking said substrate to form a silicon oxide film containing said metal or metal compound on said semiconductor film;

patterning said silicon oxide film so that only a selected region of said semiconductor layer is provided with said silicon oxide film;

and heating said semiconductor layer to crystallize the same, said metal or metal compound being diffused into said semiconductor layer during said heating.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said prebaking is carried out at such a low temperature that said metal or metal compound does not substantially diffuse into said semiconductor layer.

19. The method of claim 17 or 18 further comprising irradiating said semiconductor layer with light to increase the crystallinity thereof after said heating.

20. A method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising:

forming a semiconductor film comprising silicon on a substrate, said semiconductor film having at least a first region and a second region adjacent thereto;

forming a mask comprising silicon oxide on said second region of the semiconductor film while said first region is exposed;

selectively introducing a crystallization catalyst into the first region of said semiconductor layer; and

heat crystallizing said semiconductor layer, said catalyst migrating through said semiconductor layer from said first region to said second region during said heat crystallizing so that said second region is crystallized.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said second region of the semiconductor layer has a {111} plane.

22. The method of claim 20 or 21 wherein said catalyst is introduced by:

preparing a precursor material for forming silicon oxide, said precursor material incorporating catalyst capable of promoting crystallization of silicon;

applying said precursor material onto said semiconductor film provided with said mask, whereby said mask blocks said catalyst from diffusing into said second region; and

prebaking said precursor material in order to form a silicon oxide film on said semiconductor layer which contains said catalyst therein.

23. A method for manufacturing a semiconductor device comprising:

forming a semiconductor film comprising silicon on a substrate;

oxidizing a surface of said semiconductor film to form a silicon oxide film on said semiconductor film;

applying a solution containing a metal or metal compound onto said silicon oxide film, said metal or metal compound being capable of promoting crystallization of said semiconductor film;

diffusing said metal or metal compound into said semiconductor film through said silicon oxide film, said silicon oxide film being sufficiently thin to allow said metal or metal compound to penetrate therethrough; and

crystallizing said semiconductor film by heating.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein said silicon oxide film is formed by thermal oxidation.

25. The method of claim 23 wherein said silicon oxide film is formed by UV oxidation.

26. The method of claim 23 wherein said silicon oxide film is formed by exposing a surface of said semiconductor film to a hydro peroxide solution.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said hydro peroxide solution is added with a material selected from the group consisting of ammonium, sulfuric acid, and hydrochloric acid.

28. A semiconductor device formed on a substrate and having at least one semiconductor layer as an active region thereof, wherein said semiconductor layer comprises crystalline silicon and contains metal, and wherein said semiconductor layer has a {111} plane.

29. The semiconductor device of claim 28 wherein said metal is selected from the group comprising Pd, Pt, Cu, Ag, Au, In, Sn, Pb, P, As, Sb and Ni.

30. The semiconductor device of claim 28 or 29 wherein said metal is contained in said semiconductor layer at a concentration not higher than 1×10^{19} atoms/cm³.

31. A method of enhancing the crystallinity of a silicon film, particularly though not exclusively an amorphous silicon film, said method comprising juxtaposing with a surface of said silicon film a layer comprising a crystallization catalyst incorporated in a carrier material, and establishing process conditions such as to cause the catalyst to diffuse into the juxtaposed silicon film. 5
32. The method of claim 31 wherein the juxtapositioning of the catalyst/carrier layer with the silicon film is effected in such a manner that no, or substantially no, carrier material is introduced thereby into the silicon film. 10
33. The method of claim 31 or 31 wherein the crystallization catalyst is dissolved or suspended in a carrier fluid which is applied to a surface of the silicon film or to a substrate surface upon which the silicon film is subsequently formed. 15 20
34. The method of claim 31, 32 or 33 wherein said process conditions comprise temperature and time. 25
35. The method of any of claims 31 to 34 wherein a layer is interposed between the silicon film and the catalyst/carrier layer for enhancing the affinity of the two layers for each other. 30

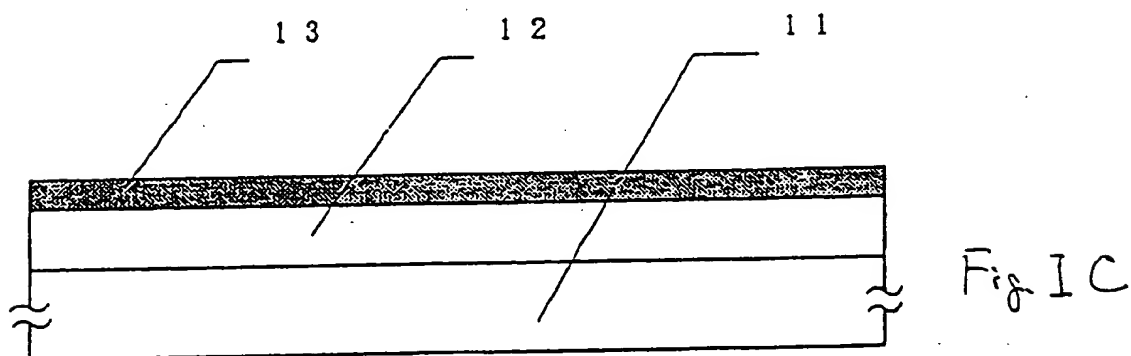
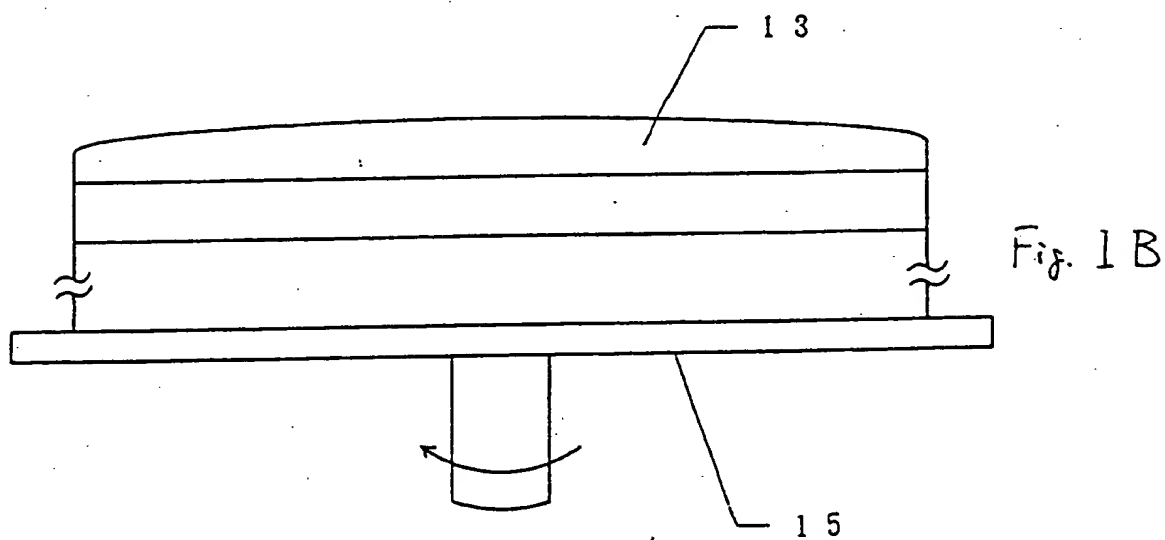
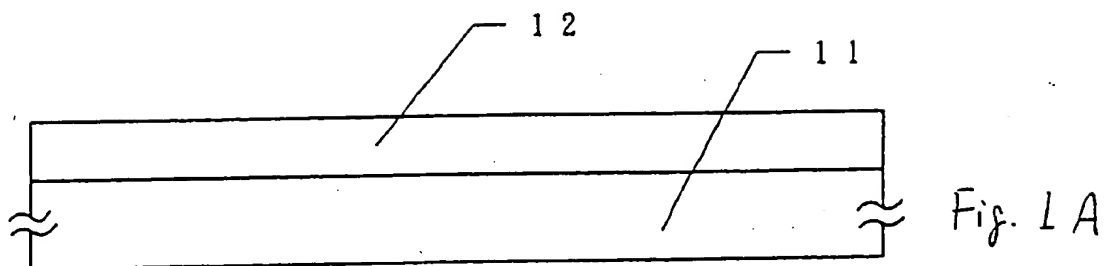
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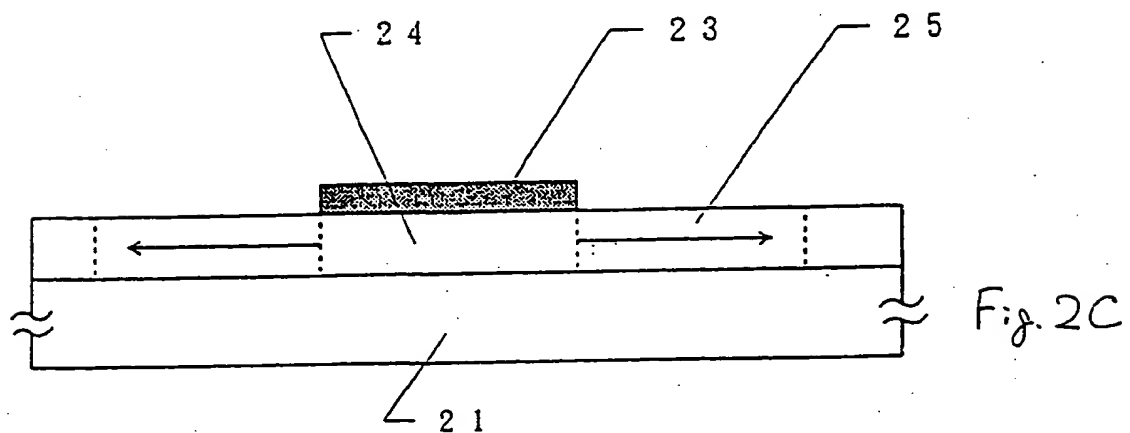
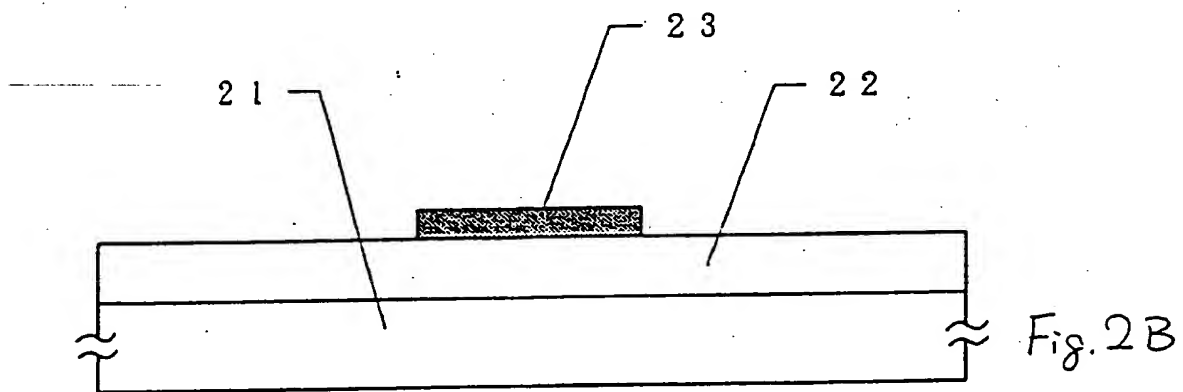
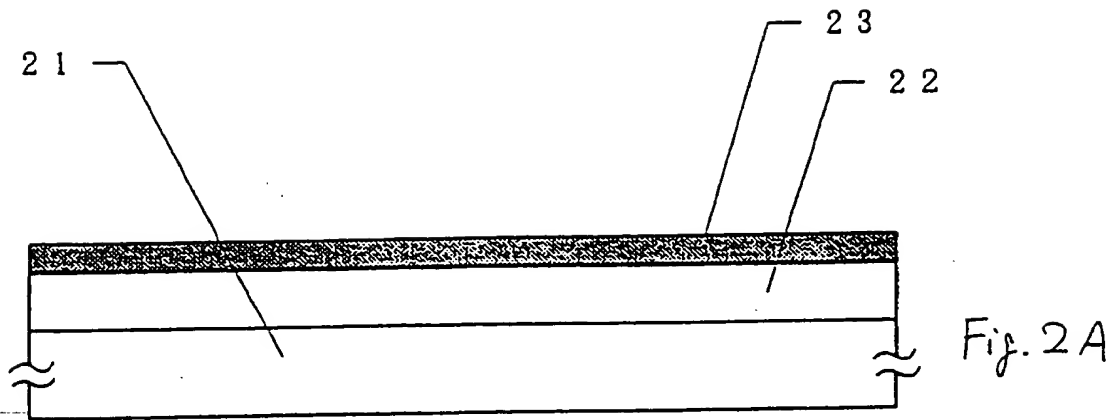
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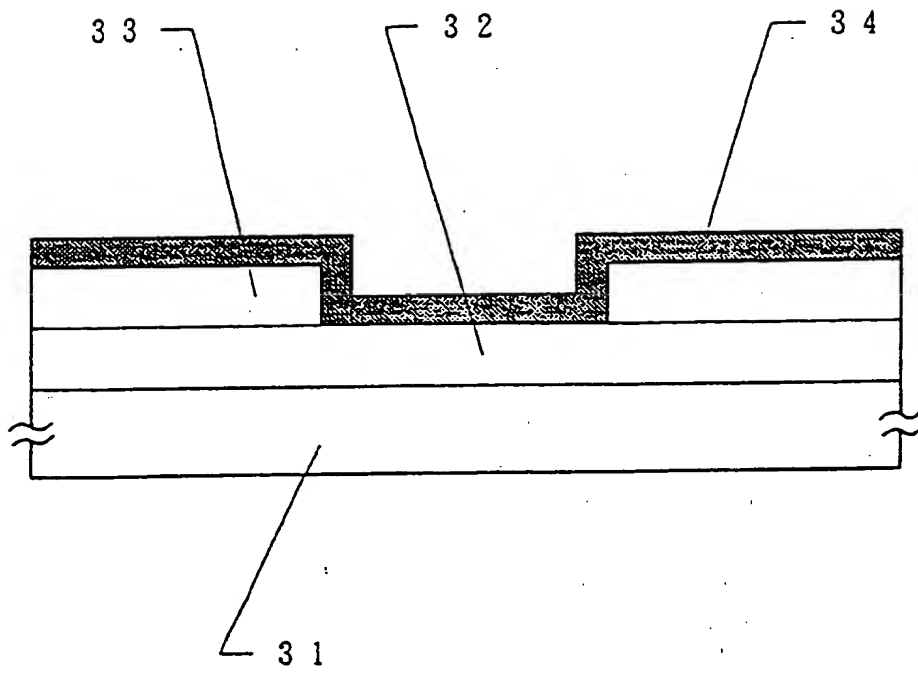


Fig. 3A

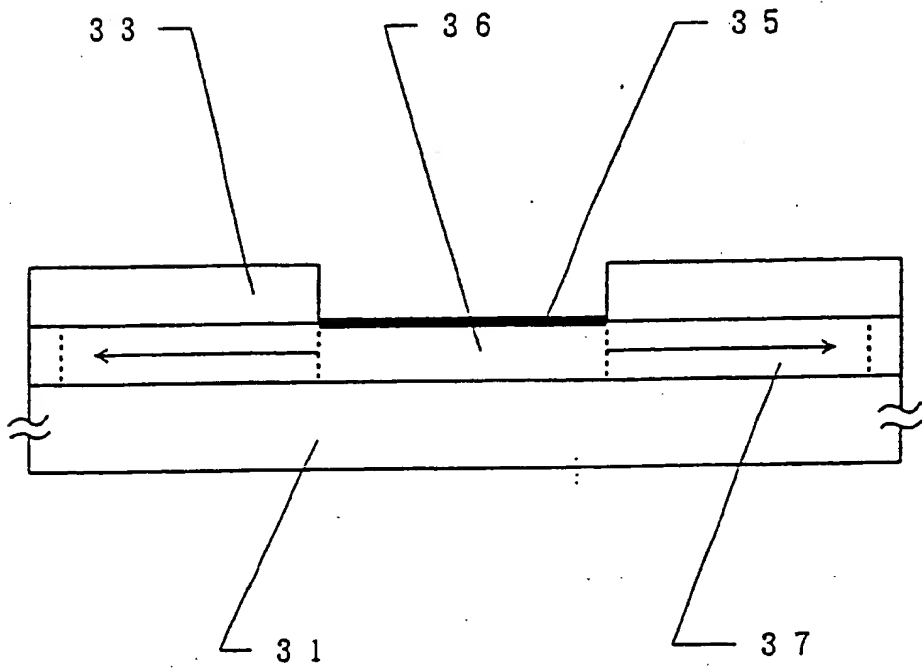


Fig. 3B

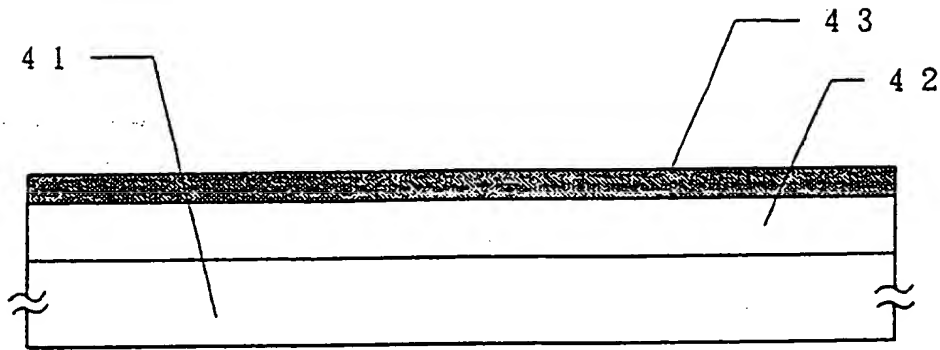


Fig. 4A

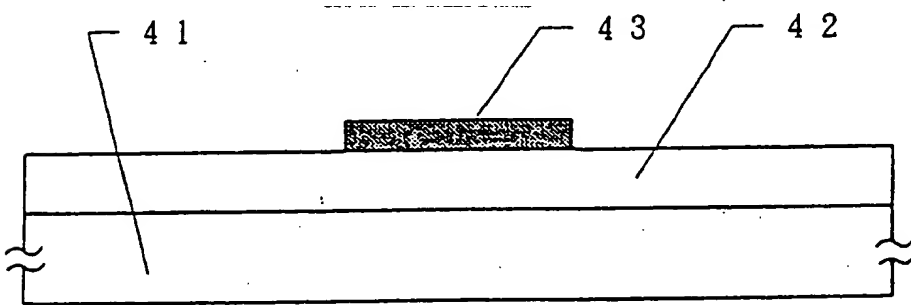


Fig. 4B

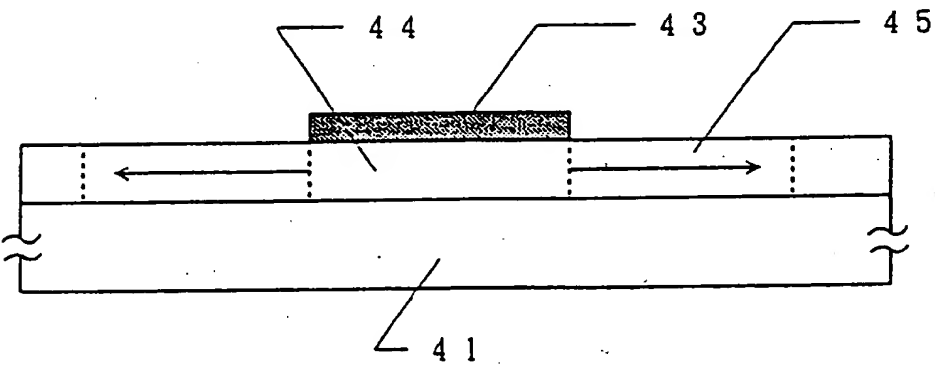


Fig. 4C

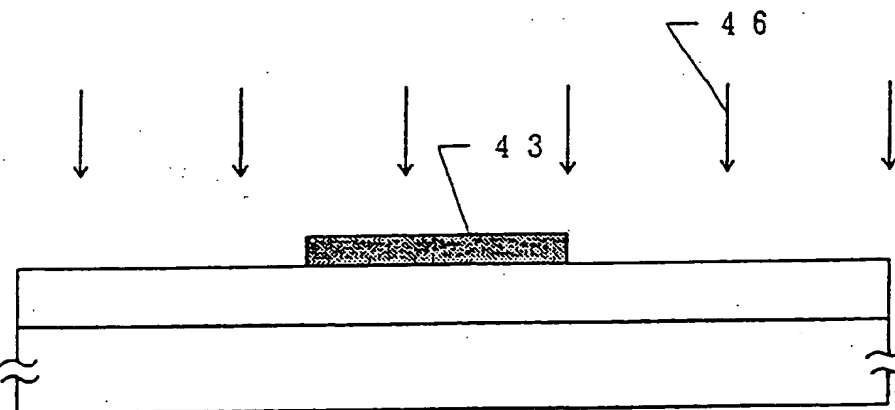


Fig. 4D

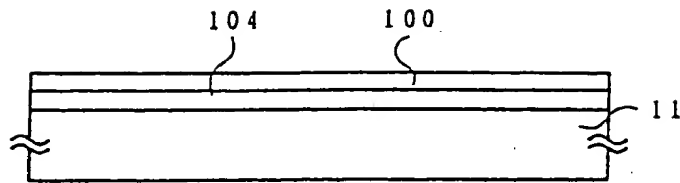


Fig. 5A

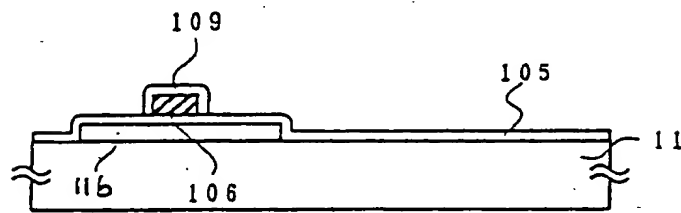


Fig. 5B

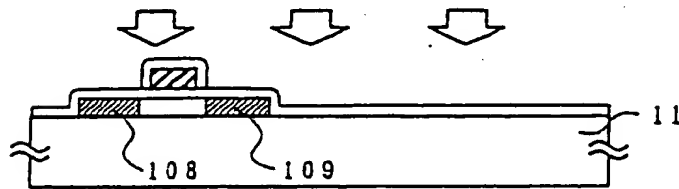


Fig. 5C

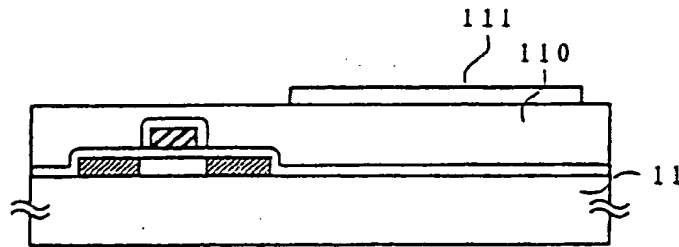


Fig. 5D

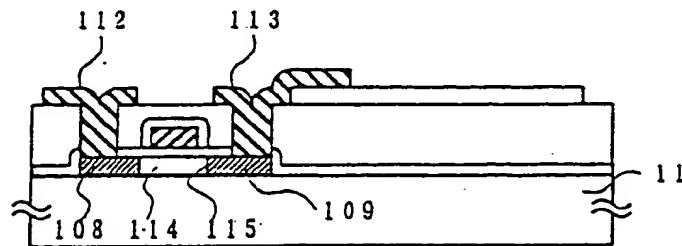


Fig. 5E

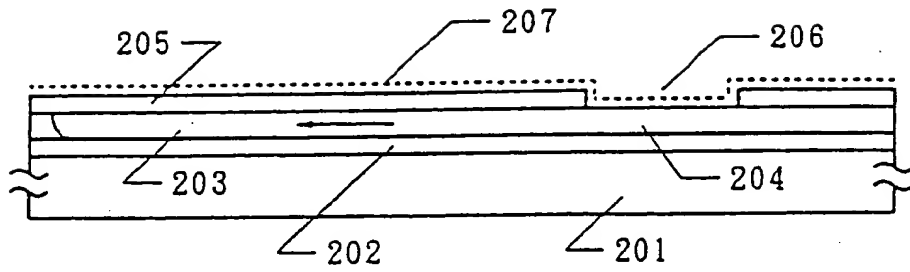


Fig. 6A

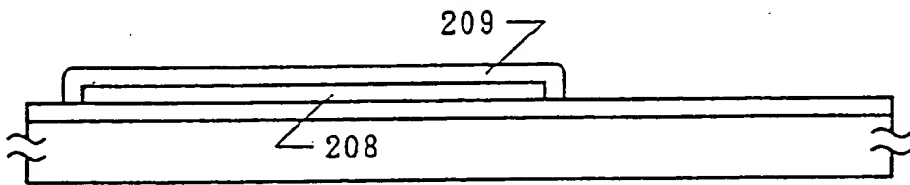


Fig. 6B

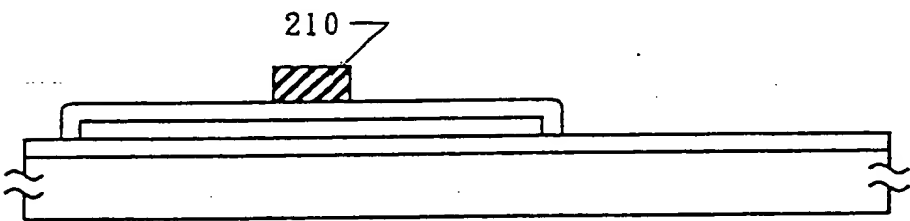


Fig. 6C

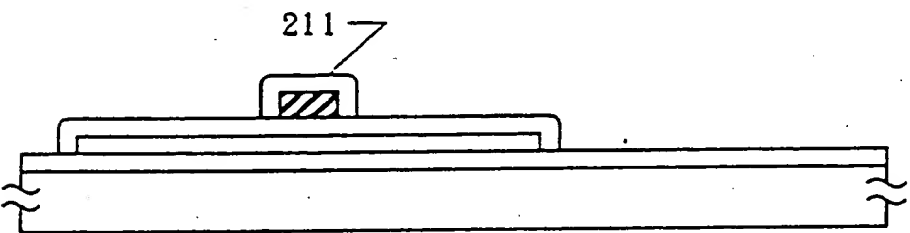


Fig. 6D

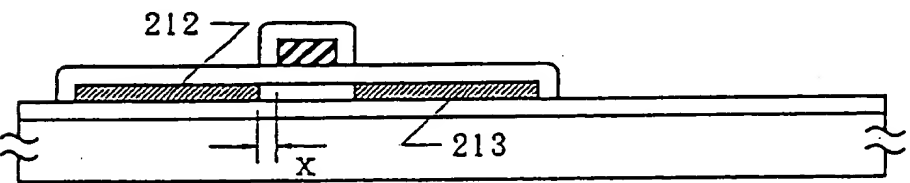


Fig. 6E

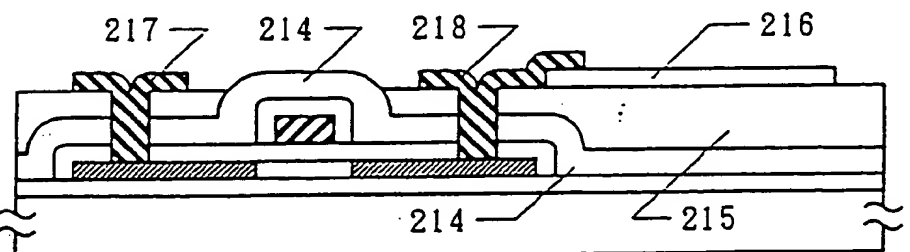


Fig. 6F

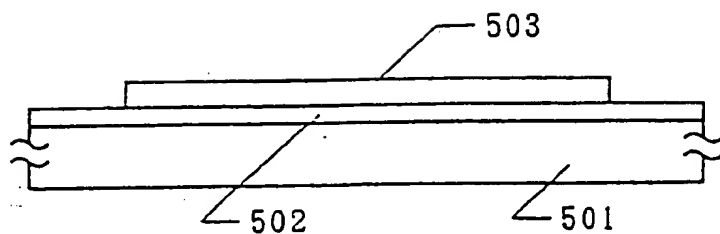


Fig. 7A

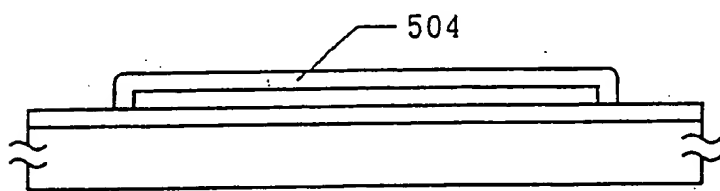


Fig. 7B

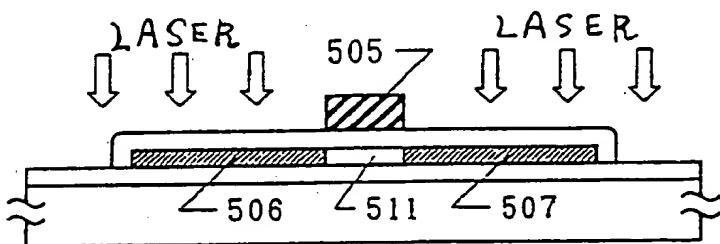


Fig. 7C

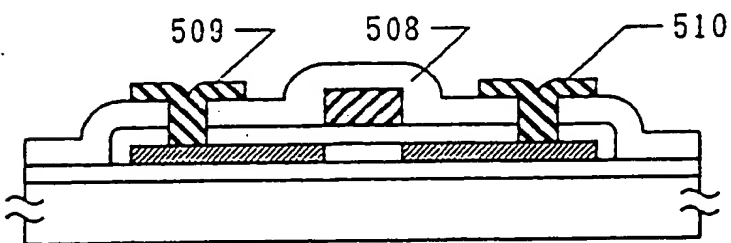


Fig. 7D

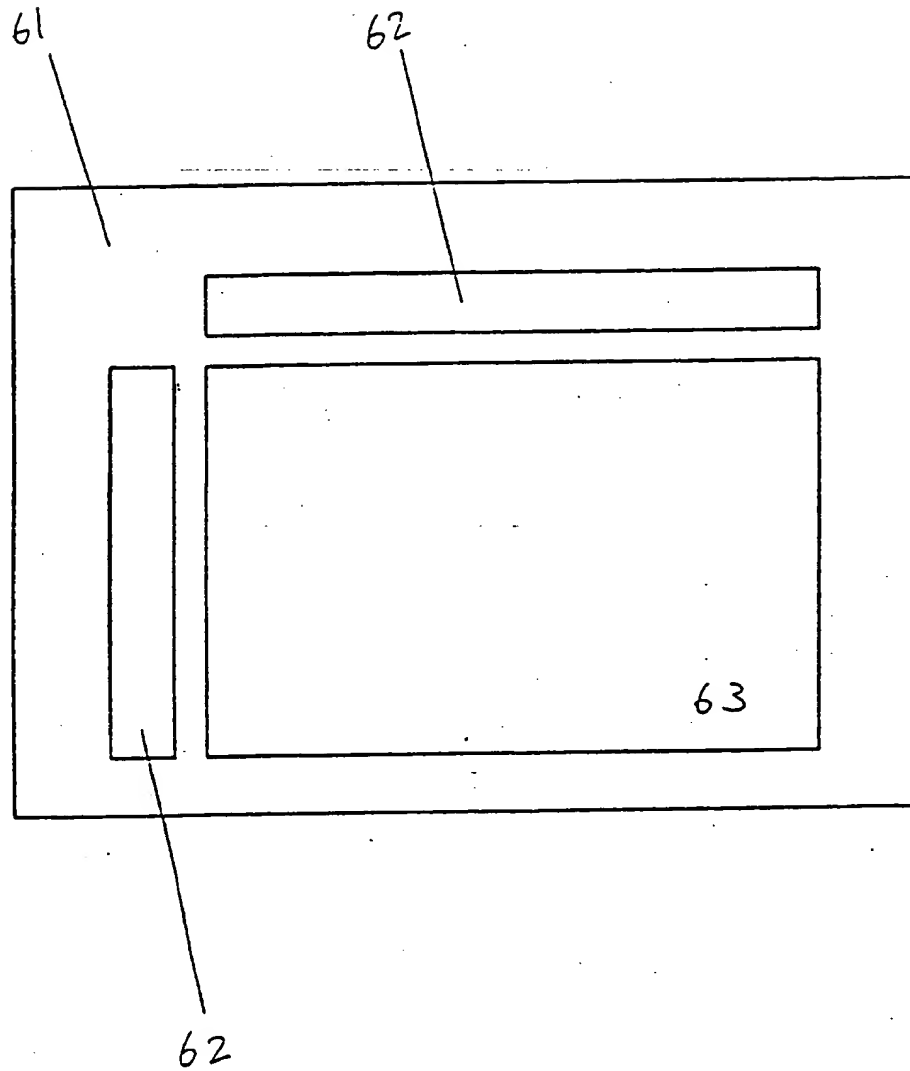


Fig. 8



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 94 30 8974

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. CL. 6)
A	US-A-5 147 826 (G.LIU ET AL.) * example 2 *	1-4, 6, 32	H01L21/20
A	WO-A-92 01089 (GEC-MARCONI LIMITED) * page 1, paragraph 2 * * claims 3, 4 *	1-5, 32	
P, X	EP-A-0 612 102 (SEMICONDUCTOR ENERGY LABORATORY CO., LTD.) * examples 9, 17 *	1-4, 6-8, 12-16, 20, 23, 25, 31-34	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. CL. 6)
			H01L
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		7 March 1995	Schuermans, N
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